

JUN 28 1961

Pens 2 m.-D.
A Y L O R

Approved For Release 2005/01/05 : CIA-RDP75-00149R000700480018-7

Panel to Weigh Chances Of Secret Red A-Tests

President Kennedy is asking a panel of eminent scientists to study whether Russia could be testing nuclear weapons secretly and what technical progress she could be making if she were.

He told newsmen the Soviet Union's refusal to negotiate seriously on a nuclear test ban at Geneva "raises a serious question about how long we can safely continue on a voluntary basis a refusal to undertake tests in this country without any assurance that the Russians are not now testing."

Mr. Kennedy said he had directed his Scientific Advisory Committee to convene the special panel of scientists to study two questions:

"First, what is the extent of our information on whether the Soviet Union has been or could be engaged in secret testing of nuclear weapons?

Will Stay at Geneva

"Second, to the extent that certain types of tests can be concealed by the Soviet Union, what technical progress in weapons could be under way in that area without our knowledge?"

The scientist's findings will be reviewed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Security Council and himself, Mr. Kennedy said. Meantime, the American negotiating team will remain in Geneva, he said.

The President appealed again to Soviet leaders "to end their intransigence and to accept a reasonable and enforceable treaty which is our wholehearted desire."

On other foreign policy matters the President said:

1. Reported the United States intends to continue negotiating at Geneva on Laos, seeking full powers for the International Control Commission to verify the cease-fire which he said is "generally" in effect.

2. Said the tractors-for-prisoners deal with Cuban Premier Castro will remain inactive unless Mr. Castro "changes his view."

"The committee (of private American citizens which went to Havana) went to every conceivable length in order to demonstrate their good faith. Mr. Castro would not accept it."

tions. Mr. Kennedy reported, "When the Killian committee has finished its preliminary surveys we may have some changes," he said.

Questioned on A-Tests

A reporter asked if the President had information whether the Soviet Union had been secretly testing nuclear weapons.

Mr. Kennedy replied, "I have not seen any information nor did the previous administration have any knowledge which would state that the Soviet Union had been testing. . . What is of concern is, is it possible to test without those evidences being secured. . . What we are concerned about is that our information is quite incomplete and we want to know if it is possible that they could be testing without our knowing."

The President alluded to difficulties he has had in securing an Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs before he appointed Robert Woodward, a career diplomat with long experience in the area.

"I was sorry that we did not

secure a replacement for Mr. (Thomas) Mann (former Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs) more quickly. I did talk to almost eight people. We had assurances in a number of cases which lasted some days. But we were not successful."

Adolf Berle, special adviser to the President on Latin American Affairs, "is completing the work of his task force," the President reported.

When Mr. Woodward takes office next week, Mr. Kennedy said, "he will be the responsible officer in the State Department, and will work closely. I am sure, with the Secretary of State and with me."